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QUAD

Spring 1977

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QUAD

QUAD is a little magazine of literature and art published twice a year by the students of Birmingham-Southern College as a means of preserving the best available creative efforts of the campus community.

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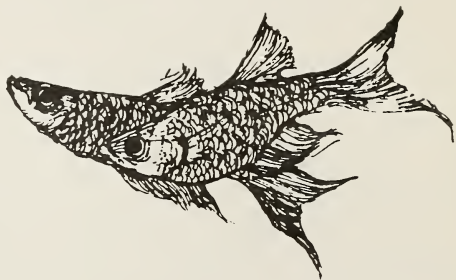
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QUAD is subsidized by the Student Government Association through the Publications Board. The material printed here is the work of students currently or recently enrolled at 'Southern. All contributions of material -- short stories, poetry, critical writings, essays, plays, photographs, art work, etc. -- are greatly appreciated. Those who wish to contribute or work on the staff should the editor for 1977-78, Jon Jefferson, at B-SC P. O. Box 627. Any criticism or suggestions from the community are welcomed.



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Department, Jane Siegel and Martha Thomas, and all of
the nice people who worked on the staff this year.



The Spider's Song

Merrily I come a-wooing,
Fat and glossy in my prime,
Wise in courtship's wanton whimsy,
Skipping four jigs all awirl:
I will end this widow's ruing,
Step her with a giddy time,
Melt that silken veil so flimsy,
Charm her black to green of girl.

— Jon Jefferson





Eating Pork Chops and Pineapples

Being a bit high, the flame caused the black skillet to sizzle with its sausage pork fat, moments before gooie since morning. Of three pork chops the smallest was chosen, not for its size, but for its position in the end of the package. Plopped onto iron it sizzled in and with the fat, spitting out its heatness all around the curvacious chop. He worked with the can opener on the counter away from the heat. Pineappleie liquid oozed as the lid circularly sunk. He removed the lid and tasted the sweetness off his fingers. The sizzling brought his attention to the chop. It got several shakes of salt on the pink side then several after the flip on the seared side. Half a small plate was filled with cool chunks of pineapple, of which one went early to dinner. With his pineapple wet fork he pressed the juices out of the chop then flipped it again. The sausage pork fat and the chop cooking let loose their heavy sweet odor of meat cooking.

His kitchen was in the back of a worn neglected farm house. He rented from an Irishman, who let three rooms to help his faltering contracting snowplow and tractor. He wore a crimson red robe over his work clothes for the nights in the kitchen were chilly until the oven or grid flames warmed.

After a flip and a press he speared the chop to transfer it to his plate, one with gold flowers bordering. The plate went to the table, a formica one. Then he poured a near flat Pepsi from a near empty quart bottle and sat to eat. And ate.

-- I love her. She loves me. But after it all how do we come to a re-union?

The floating introspection was devoured by the chop and the pineapple. For some while his tongue ruled quietly, even until he gnawed the fat from the bone and then sucked before handing it to the Mr. Grubber -- Grubs, the dog, who dropped it to the floor and grinned at it momentarily. In his plate was the pineapple juice and the chop juice cooked in sausage pork fat and salt.

-- I must consult the frog. Frog just sits most the day. Frog should know the how tos. Yeah. Yeah. Yeah. Frog should know. ... just sits. Whips out that tongue for a meal. Hummm!

From staring at the puddle of pungencies he centered on a buzz and whipped out his own arm, unflighting the first of the spring flies.

-- Frog food! Frog should know. He went out while still in that red flannel robe. The night danced with spring wind and white moon brightened rain clouds and cedars that swayed. To the pile of bricks dumped over with dirt he made his way, fly buzzing in hand, the thought of re-union buzzing in his head.

-- No wraiths like those of a woman shorn/ no barbs like those of a rose's thorn!
Manchild gawks at his uncleverly cog/ Manchild gawks then runs to Mr. Frog!

He laughed, tee hee hee. And his eyes grew open with the force and play of the night wind. And there in the entrance to his home underneath those dirt covered bricks sat Mr. Frog, in bumpy silence, mouth turned down into a subtle soft smile, and his red robe seemed nearly black in the absence of much light.

-- Damn ole Frog just sitting. Lookit that.

His eyes widened the more with great affection.

He merely nodded his greetings. The night was too loud to be broken.

-- You know already, Mr. Frog!

-- How shall the re-union occur?

He stepped on a stick digging it into the earth; his eyes went heavenward.

-- Hummm!

-- No union between earth and heaven. Inner weakness.

-- Hummm!

-- Union between earth and heaven. Inner strength.

-- Taught by the negative! Teaching by the negative, Mr Frog?

-- How will she go about bringing a re-union?

A rain cloud popped open. The shower hit sunflower seeds at his feet and they soaked up the nourishment while waiting for the warmth of late April.

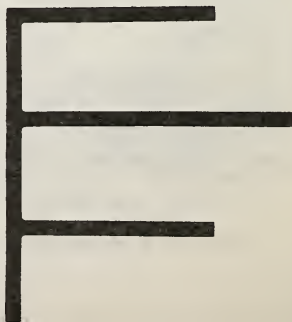
-- Ah Ha! Back to the direct. Back to the direct, Mr. Frog!

-- And ... And how shall I go about bringing a re-union?

He caught the stillness of the distant lake, which had a mountain jiggling it to a joyful shimmie from underneath it, from within it, by wooing it.



— David Beasley







Vision of Julian of Norwich

Shimmering behind or through (or in?)
the rainbow drops of spray
He smiled
Like no man I'd ever seen,
no man this
But male
pulsing, searching, seeking.
He lifted me high
and smiled through mirrored drops of rain
as if to comfort me.

Caught in the grasp of a formless presence
which was yet embodied in the drops o
and the clouds and the thunder,
I screamed,
noncomprehension seizing my brain.
Quietly he held me,
endured the shrieks until I was calm enough
or tired enough to hear him,
to hear what wasn't a voice,
to hear him, without my ears, saying:

You.
You who give so freely what others hoard
You who have been called fool and martyr and beauty
You who cry as soon as safely alone

I
I who ride the crest of the sky
I who roar through the night, alone
I who have been called terrible, destroyer, and glorious
The light covers my face, trailing darkness

You who have loved
a dryad, a madman, a priest, and a minstrel
Now you shall love me
Now you shall love me
Now you shall love me

Pure drops of water will wash away your tears
And trailing wisps of the clouds make your garments.
The lightning shall amuse you and you will sing with the thunder.
I will never let you go
And you will love me
for I love you already

— s. lair

To A Friend

IV

I love to watch you, my friend, for
you are so marvelously skilled at making people smile.

I have seen you, with a well placed remark
and timely jest, change a person's morning
from a time to be endured to one to be enjoyed.

You have teased away tears, and made
little tragedies seem trivial things.

How do you do this?

I've tried to emulate you, your ways, your manner.

But it is not with your manner that
you succeed in inspiring love;

Only the fact that you care enough
about those around you
to try,

Therefore,

I can only watch,
and admire.

MB

We should think about the whole world; after all, it is the
whole world we live in, if thoughts make our boundaries
and not county lines.

— S. Kim Blackmon





The cool air sits calmly now
Gathering her breath for the howls of winter.
In a sprinkle of gold, a shadow of red, she waits,
Making her bed of brown, rust and grey.
Sneaking 'round red brick, shadowy doorways filled with her presence
To gently finger a flag
Nodding sleepily on a grey fall day.

—Linde Brocato



Lemon, almond, indigo
blooming like some
stiff bud
upon the trees-- Or
chrysalides for moths?
More borne into the sky
with each new wind.
The sky is
royal China with color
and torn bed linen.
While just above the ground
we walk on strings--in twine
about our feet,
and children run before the
wind, following
their kites into the air.

—Glenda Savage



Infants

I always find you in this
Grocery store side show.
Bungling and bashful stares
Make you hold your head low
As if tallness lies in
the burrow to China.
These armless onlookers
embrace you in their glazed
expressions. I hobble to the
can of peas, desperately in-
terested in the Green Giant.
The small steps you wrestle
Pitter like rain on a tin roof.
An army of pellets on a pharoah's
Tomb.
Your contraband of companions
Linger in the train. Bearded
And breasted, weighty and headless,
These choices of sexuality baffle
all; From the inconstant to my
determined want. The dialectic
of your lives cannot be resolved
in your bodies. So you wait and
collect your quarters, fiercely
Staring back at these normal
Grocery store giants.

—melissa springer

A sliver of flame dances before my eyes--
mine, always, to do with what I will...

A single snuff of my fingers
gone, ended, and I freed
to dance through the darkness
unhindered;

A puff from my lips, it swells
warm and lingering to be;

A long impassioned breath, it leaps up
and devours the universe, myself,
and those around me
in a searing embrace of roaring
destruction.

Small and pale in winter, it is always
before me and my eyes
delight in its swaying through autumnal winds.
In springtime, it is demon's flame
and in summer roars and reaches
for the North Star,
desiring what it can never embrace,
the two flames become one.

A sliver of flame, mine though I never asked
what I would have to do for it.

It looked so pretty in the Master's hand.
For the sake of its orange, red, yellow, and blue,
its warmth and purity, the ever-changing rhythm of
itself, its ever-beginning being...

I reached out my hand
it jumped to my outstretched fingers
and it will never leave me
till I put it back
from whence it came.

It glows, milord.

—s. lair





Charlie Brown wasn't joking
About how peanut butter consoles the lonely.
Many a sleepless night
I've watched the digital clock
Turn— 1, 2, 3, 4, . . .
'Til I grew possessed with the thought of
Peanut Butter!
Throwing a cautious look to my snoozing roomy,
I gently eased from the bed.
Groping in the dark for crackers,
Knife and peanut butter—
Fat caloric weapons, but such
Soothers of the soul,
I felt only slightly ashamed.
As the crumbs lay
Like little elfin footprints
Upon my nylon nightgown
I knew the evidence could not be hidden.
But before I closed the lid
Tightly upon my obsession,
I licked the knife to an immaculate gleam,
Then dipping my finger into the jar
Brought forth one last delicious glob
For the way it clings to my skin
Is comforting.

—Martha Speer

People

A reflecting pool of mirrors:

Desire intertwined with expectations;
Individual and collectified,
Unique and commonplace.

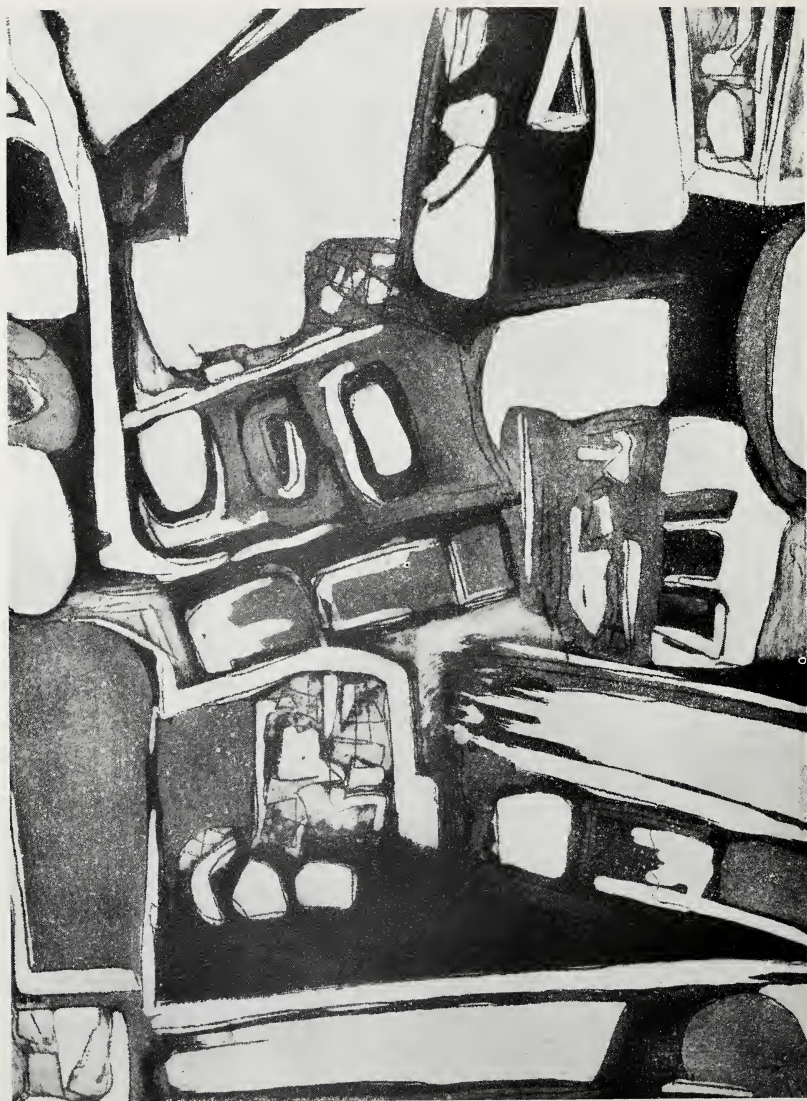
Each person is the formation of ideas,
a recognizable personification
for identification
that will correspond to the observer ideal
in humanity.

We are product of the moment
manufactured for an Instant's pleasure
to impress the unimportant.

We exist in the expectations
of the eyes that surround us.

—Tim Kendrick





March winds wreak havoc with the tender trees of my prison,
Ripping twig and leaf and acorn from branches high,
Flinging gustsful of leafy garbage to the earth.
But I hurry onward
Unmindful of the rape around me.

My days are perfectly tuned pianos, giving the proper note
of response when the proper key is struck.
Rising, I shower and dress, traversing my prison, the city,
to arrive at my cell.
"Good morning, Sir. Mail, Sir? Coffee, Sir? Shall I make
two copies, Sir?"
Lunch breaks my routine, providing a bit of anticipation as
I reach for the sack. But my brown bag yields little
of interest.
One half hour later the sonata resumes. The contents of the
brown bag are lost to my memory.
At five I again traverse my prison.
T. V. dinners and gas bills eagerly await my return.
I carefully water the Boston fern and tap the daily ration of
flakes into the goldfish bowl.
So ends another thrilling day.

Except that you have called while I am dusting my books.
(Routine number five after washing out my hosiery.)
My life suddenly turns bright, I am elated beyond belief.
For a few brief hours I live outside myself, purveyor of
circus smiles, sunshine warmth and crackerjacks sweetness.
Then you put me back in my drawer until you are again bored,
needsome of distraction.
Coffee, Sir? Shall I make two copies? Your mail is here. . . .

JRM

*The sidewalks are deserted now.
Only for a moment
Could the students seize
That childhood abandon,
Sliding down icy streets
On briefly borrowed cafeteria trays.
The stolid buildings stood empty-
Aghast at such seldom heard laughter,
But with the chill advent of night
The wind-blown voices
Drift away.*

—Martha Speer

*I must not forget. It takes
effort to remember and there
is reward in doing so.
Beautiful. The china tea cup
was delicate and had tiny
flowers and it sounded when
I clinked it. The tea was
strange and oriental
and in an oriental tea shop.
There was cigar smoke and
wood and patterned curtains.
And eyes, glinting with laughter,
fierce with emotion, a face
strong with love. A cookie--
a brown, sandy short cake
cookie. Jasmin tea.*

*A gentleman. An incident.
A memory.*

—S. Kim Blackmon





BEANS

PEAS

POULTRY

EGGS

POTATOES (Sweet)

BEETS

CABBAGE

CARROTS

COLLARDS

CORN

CUCUMBERS

LETTUCE

MUSTARD

OKRA

ONIONS

BUTTER

POLE

BUNCH

LADY

CROWDER

BLACK EYE

ENGLISH

FRYERS

SMOTHERS

HENS

ROOSTERS

TURKEYS

DRESSED

26²⁵

24²⁵

SMALL

POTATOES (High)

RADISH

RUTABAGER

SPINACH

TENDER GREENS

TURNIPS

TOMATOES

40

15

10

25

75

60

30

75

50

35

35

1/12

1/12

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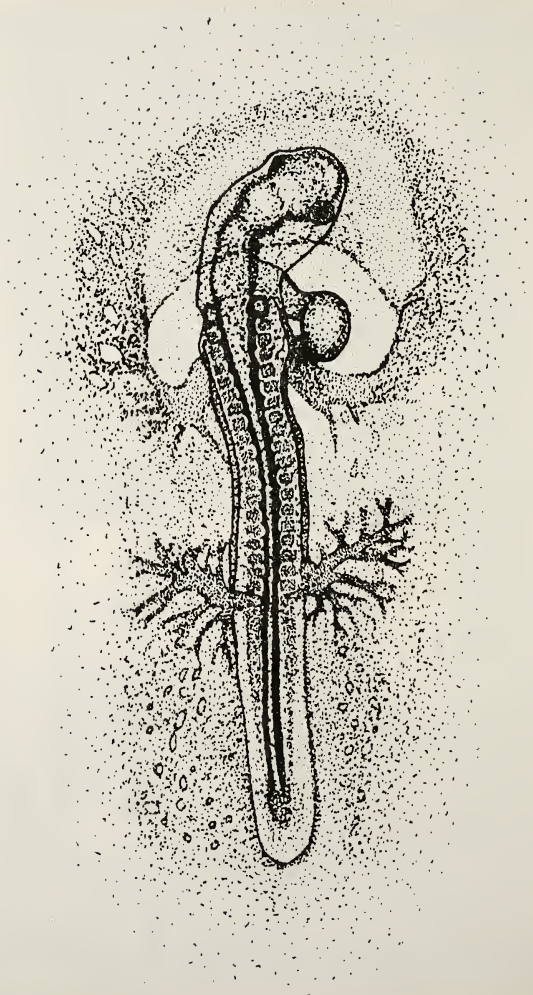
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The hollow halls
 crash and thunder
 with each step.
Sound and fury, signifying nothing,
 for all else is silent—
 as the halls, my soul.
The only sound is each pulse
 of my heart, beating out
 each step toward my death.

The meanings dissolve
 in front of me
 even as I touch them.
There is no peace, save in action,
 and no action
 can last forever.
I know that. I fear that.

Home for the holidays
 they are and I
 walk empty, hollow halls,
My thoughts echoing and chiming
 and collapsing always
 into dust.
Somehow, someday,
 I've got to live with her
 who is myself
 in peace.

— s. lair



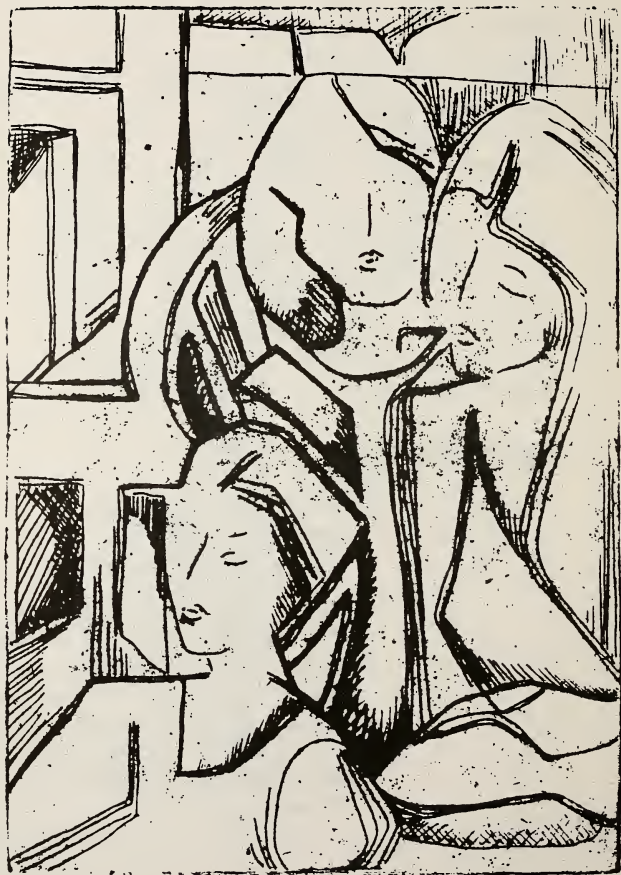
I,
daring to take up my pen
and call myself a poet,
Could never render through verse
The simple miracle
Of one perfect snowflake.
Then why bother?

Because when that miniature crystal star
More beautiful than any imitation
Dangling on my Christmas tree
melts,
I cannot trust my memory
To recapture its pure essence
Without the aid of words.

— Martha Speer

Sometimes I want to grapple with life,
to grasp it and just barely get it and
wear it 'til it's threadbare, getting
every inch I can. I want to worry it
and nag it and question it and ask it
what right it has to bother me, here-
tofore perhaps a peaceful
nothing

— S. Kim Blackmon



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